



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

342 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06117-2507

(860) 586-7506 Fax: (860) 586-7550 Web site: www.cpcanet.org

Testimony to the Committee on Public Safety, March 3, 2011 Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan, and members of the Committee on Public Safety, we speak for the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association to testify on several Bills.

We support H.B. No. 6429 AAC CONCERNING STORAGE OF STOLEN PROPERTY. Currently police must seize and hold as evidence stolen property valued over \$250, though it is seldom needed as evidence by the court; property of less value may be returned to the owner. The requirement:

- Deprives the rightful owner of the property until the court orders its return.
- Requires an officer making a routine misdemeanor larceny arrest to log and inventory evidence, keeping the officer off the street longer.
- May add to police overtime cost.
- Makes police responsible for storing and accounting for this evidence.

The General Assembly raised the property-value thresholds on degrees of larceny in 2009 (P.A. 09-138), the threshold on holding stolen property as evidence has not changed since 1985 (P.A. 85-263), from \$50 (1976) to \$250. This bill raises the threshold to \$500 (the Larceny Fifth threshold) which is reasonable.

We support H.B. No. 6415 AAC PERMIT TO SELL AND TO CARRY ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPONS, which would set up a permit system, mirroring that for handguns, for TASERS and similar stun guns. Although it would require some additional work for police agencies, there would be a benefit to public safety in that citizens reluctant to carry firearms could provide for their own defense using less-lethal devices. We further appreciate that user error would be less likely to be fatal than with a firearm.

We are concerned about S.B. No. 966 AAC PERMITS TO SELL FIREARMS. We are uncertain whether and how dealers will fulfill their statutory responsibilities away from their established premises.

We oppose S.B. No. 967 AAC APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEMPORARY STATE PERMIT TO CARRY A PISTOL OR A REVOLVER. The bill would limit application to the form prescribed by the Commissioner of Public Safety. CGS 29-29 says, "The local authority shall take a full description of such applicant and make an investigation concerning the applicant's suitability to carry any such weapons." The form—the DPS-799-C—may fail to elicit information relevant to suitability, such as mental illness, criminal gang membership, history of drug or alcohol abuse, or past careless handling of weapons. To keep guns from the wrong hands, the issuing authority must have the tools to do a thorough investigation.

We oppose H.B. No. 6377 AAC FIREARMS PREEMPTION. Its broad language would forbid a municipality to regulate, restrict or license the ownership, possession, use, purchase, sale, transportation or transfer of firearms or ammunition. CGS 29-28(e) allows person who owns or exercises control over a premises to prohibit possession or carrying of a pistol or revolver; a town should be able to likewise regulate its schools, playgrounds, or public buildings in its control.